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This Week in Congress

August 16, 2010

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I have enjoyed being back in Kansas while Congress has been out of session for the August district work period:

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Cutting Unnecessary Government Spending

This week, the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW) released its 2009 Congressional Ratings, highlighting the voting records of all 535 members of Congress. In 2009, CCAGW examined 120 votes in the House of Representatives and gave Members a score based on a 0 to 100 percent scale for fiscal responsibility. I was honored to be recognized as a "Taxpayer Hero" with a score of 94 percent. The federal government is broke and instead of spending more taxpayer dollars and burdening businesses with costly mandates, Congress should cut spending and focus on job creation. In Kansas, we have a constitutional requirement to balance the budget and I believe the federal government should have the same discipline. For more information on CCAGW's 2009 Congressional ratings, please visit: <http://ccagwratings.org>

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Preventing EPA from Imposing Redundant Regulations on Ag Producers

I joined Ranking Member Frank Lucas (R-OK), and five of my colleagues on the House

Agriculture Committee this week to introduce H.R. 6087, which makes clear that agriculture producers, who are in compliance with Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) requirements, do not need to obtain Clean Water Act permits for the use of pesticides. FIFRA provides the basis for regulation, sale, distribution and use of pesticides in the U.S.

Since passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, lawful pesticide applications regulated under FIFRA have been excluded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process. This long-standing practice was defended over nearly four decades and codified into law under the Bush Administration. In January 2009, however, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned this practice. Rather than defend its long-standing practice on appeal, the EPA made a deliberate decision to add to the growing regulatory burden on American businesses and agricultural producers. In doing so, EPA abandoned farm groups, who were forced to unsuccessfully pursue the appeal of the case on their own. It is now up to Congress to step in on behalf of farmers, ranchers, and businesses by upholding this long-standing practice.

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Health Care Access

On Thursday, I visited Health Care Access, a clinic that serves low-income and uninsured patients in Lawrence. The clinic serves about 1,400 Douglas County residents yearly and

receives about half their operating budget from grants, fundraisers, and donations. This clinic is an example of a community coming together and providing quality medical services for people in need. It will also help lower the cost of healthcare in the community as people visit the clinic for their care instead of an emergency room. Thanks to Nikki King, Elizabeth Week Leonard, Gene Meyer, State Representative Tom Sloan, and the rest of the board of Health Care Access for showing me around and visiting with me. [Click here](#) to see a photo of my visit. [Click here](#) to watch a video about my visit.



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Visiting with Community Leaders in Goodland

On Saturday morning, I visited with local community leaders at Goodland Greenline. For more than 25 years, Goodline Greenline has specialized in agriculture, lawn and garden equipment and served the residents of Northwest Kansas. During my visit on Saturday, I enjoyed meeting with local business and ag leaders to hear their unique perspective on issues facing Northwest Kansas. Thanks to Ron Lucas for hosting the event and to all the community leaders for attending.

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“Stop Loss” Compensation Deadline Approaching for Military Personnel

Last year, Congress approved a \$500 per month payment for service members who had their military enlistment involuntarily extended – a policy known as “stop loss.” Troops serving under stop loss orders from 2001 until 2009 are eligible for this special compensation. The deadline to apply for this payment is October 21, 2010, and thousands of service members have yet to submit a claim. [Click here](#) for more information on eligibility and how to apply.

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Visiting Overland Park and Topeka Rotary Clubs

Rotary began more than 100 years ago and today, there are more than 1.2 million members in over 200 countries. This week, I attended Rotary Club meetings in Overland Park and Topeka to visit with business and community leaders. As a fellow Rotarian, I always enjoy meeting with Kansas Rotary Clubs to learn more about their efforts to improve their local community. Thanks to Greg Musil of the Overland Park Rotary Club for the invitation to visit, and to Gordon Lansford, Topeka Club President, and Anita Wolgast, Topeka club President-elect, for their hospitality during my visit. [Click here](#) to see a photo of my visit with the Topeka Rotary Club.

